

VOTE



Marc Leadbeater

St Peter Port North

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I believe I share the same values as regular Guernsey folk and I want to help all of us get a better deal. Our government has failed to deliver any feeling of positive change so we need to create new momentum. We can only achieve this with the introduction of fresh ideas, new ways of looking at problems and not being indecisive or frightened to make tough decisions. We can no longer tolerate huge losses such as the PFOS debacle and we can no longer dilly around with decisions like we did over the migrant crisis. Jersey accepted a multimillion pound settlement from 3M and instantly said no when the issue of accepting refugees was raised. Our government made us look foolish over both of these issues, and when it eventually realised that we were making ourselves another target for these poor desperate souls to try and reach it labelled us islamophobic. We need a forward thinking and more cohesive government to steady the ship and move us forward, and I believe I can play an important part.

Education

The decisions narrowly passed in the States last month seem to have polarised public opinion somewhat. I do think that selection at 11 needed to be improved or removed, but it would have been better if Education had offered an alternative first. I am sceptical about the 3 school model as this brings concerns over the effect it would have on our infrastructure, and possible future rises in class numbers. I would like to see Jane Stephens elected this term in St Sampsons, and for her to be given the chair of the new Committee for Education, Sports and Culture. Jane has the skills and experience in this field and is extremely passionate about it, so she belongs on the committee tasked with delivering on these issues. We must be careful those students who will be in or entering secondary education when the changes are introduced don't suffer during the transition.

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Healthcare

How come the majority of our specialists are locums? I have had to deal with the healthcare professionals in Guernsey and in the UK for nearly 18 years now and I know that continuity of care is vitally important. My son was under the care recently of Dr Lakhani at MSG. I had heard through other parents that Dr Lakhani was due to leave the island so at our last appointment I asked him if this was true and if so why. He said that his contract had finished and so he had to leave. I asked him if he would have preferred to stay and he said emphatically yes, and went on to tell me

how he'd miss Guernsey and his patients. He is a very talented and thorough doctor that was just getting to know his patients and now someone else will come in on another short contract and have to begin the process of learning about the patients just as he has just done. I have also been made aware of a number of local nurses wanting to return to the profession on a part time or job share basis but HSSD have said no, preferring to bring nurses in on licence instead. HSSD should be encouraging local nurses back to work even if they can only manage part time, it would help their families and also benefit our economy.

Discrimination

There is absolutely no place in our society for discrimination of any kind whatsoever. The fact that 8 of our current Assembly voted against the same sex proposals brought before the States back in December last year and 3 were absent shocked me. For me this was not just a vote on same sex relationships, it should also have been a vote to demonstrate that we will no longer tolerate discrimination of any kind on our island. None of the members of our society should have to endure any level of discrimination – we are all equal and should all have the same equal rights. I will fully support policy that helps to stamp out any form of discrimination.

Elderly and dementia care

To say that we are failing our senior citizens at the time they need us most is an understatement. The GHA are spending lots of money building extra care flats such as those at Le Grand Courtil and La Nouvelle Marataine but not enough is being done for people who can no longer look after themselves at home. Dementia is a growing problem and we need to do much more to provide appropriate care for the hard working members of our society in their twilight years.

Housing

The targets that were set of building 300 new homes per year were unrealistic from the beginning. The Annual Stock Bulletin shows that in 2015, 185 new units were built with 41 being removed, giving a net increase of 144. Of these 16% were affordable and 21.5% were supported units. Supported units consist of sheltered and extra care accommodation provided the States and the GHA. We have a present situation where we are not creating the level of affordable housing to fulfil our needs, and we are not creating enough homes for dementia sufferers and people with EMI or Nursing Home Certification. The new Draught Island Development Plan is being produced and it is based on planning

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covenants to ensure the level of affordable homes gets built. These covenants have recently been removed by the States which has further cast doubt on our ability to adequately build affordable housing.

Immigration and its effects on industry

This is a contentious issue because we need guest workers to help industry grow but there are problems. There are businesses starting up in Guernsey that are employing only foreign workers on low pay. These companies have created an unfair advantage for themselves when it comes to winning contracts. Each day I am witnessing the damage this is doing to our construction industry alone. Guest workers are being taken advantage of by being considered not worthy of receiving a decent wage, and our good established companies and tradesmen are struggling to find enough work to make ends meet. We need to put measures in place to ensure that this

doesn't continue and we can protect the good hard working people that operate within this industry. I also think that all guest workers entering Guernsey should have a Police check before being granted a licence. This is standard practice in other jurisdictions and it should be here too.

Drug policy

There may be many misconceptions regarding drug use in Guernsey but the most commonly overlooked area is currently at a critical level. The misuse of prescription drugs is rife and far too many people are becoming addicted to antidepressants and painkillers. The percentage of deaths from prescription drugs in Guernsey is phenomenal compared to that of the UK. Yet we blindly follow UK drugs policy with the misguided view that they know what's better for Guernsey. I've been talking to parents of prescription drug users, users themselves, people that work in the health service and pharmacies, people in the prison service – the people at the sharp end of this problem. They agree we need to address this immediately. We need to step back and take a proper look at our attitude towards drugs, identify which drugs are ruining lives and killing people, and how can we address this. I've been talking to people about this issue for some time and I was relieved when I saw the article in the Press on 9th March compounding our cause. 80% of people referred for drug treatment in Guernsey are addicted to prescription drugs, compared with only 16% in the UK. There are countless other prescription drug users that go under the radar as they get their medication from the large illicit prescription drug market on the island. The drugs that our children and the vulnerable members of our society are getting hooked on are brought into the island legally and without adequate regulation. They are then distributed legally, and a large proportion of them are then redistributed illegally. Prescription drug addiction is totally indiscriminate. It doesn't matter what upbringing someone

may have had or what level of education – anyone can get caught. We need to act now!

Tax and spending

We need to ease the continued levels of increased taxes on our population. Zero 10 doesn't work. It's wholly unfair that the responsibility of paying tax be placed solely on our population, yet corporations are making vast amounts of money whilst contributing nothing towards delivering the services our island needs. We as parents raise our children to the best of our abilities, our Education Department spend millions each year and together we provide a production line of intelligent, talented people, many of which go on to work for these corporations and help them to flourish. We need some parity because every taxpayer in Guernsey is being penalised by this system. Of equal importance is the money that our states and departments waste. Set aside for a moment the well publicised wasting of

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public money like the PFOS debacle that cost us £8m, because there are potentially equal levels of hidden waste. I have spoken to many Civil Servants across all departments, and general consensus is that morale is low. These hard working individuals have no voice to be able to highlight where money is wasted, or suggest how their jobs could work more efficiently saving time and money. This would also create a better working environment, and a better experience for the public when dealing with them. I believe we should create a platform for Civil Servants to make suggestions as to how they think we can save money and improve the delivery of services.

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KEY ELECTION ISSUES AT A GLANCE

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MY Profile



Early years

I was born on September 10th 1970 at the former Amherst Hospital. I began my primary education at Amherst School then my family moved to the Forest for a few years so my junior education was at Forest School. I then went on to La Mare de Carteret for my secondary education. After leaving school I went to work for my father and began an apprenticeship at the College of Further Education where I then qualified as a carpenter in 1989; I have worked in Guernsey ever since.

Profession

Upon leaving school I worked for my father's building company until 2001. I then co-founded Bonsai Group Ltd and worked within the group as a Partner and Technical Director until I left in 2005 to form Pure Wood Floors. I was also a co-founder of Ezydeck UK, a business involved in importing specialist timber products from Australia into the UK market. I also held the position of Technical Director within that company for its duration. I am currently still involved in the timber and construction industry in Guernsey.

Family life

I have a son called Spencer who was born in 1998. Spencer was diagnosed with a very rare condition called Hemimegalencephaly and spent most of his first year in Great Ormond St Hospital. He underwent lifesaving surgery at 8 months old, but it left him without the use of the left hand side of his body. Over the last 17 years his mother and I have had some tough calls to make but I am happy to say that through many operations and therapies, perseverance and determination, he now has a quality of life we could only have dreamt of. Spencer leaves school next year and will be going into Adult Services meaning that his mother and I can continue to work. I wanted to stand at the last election in 2012, but at that time we didn't know what would happen when Spencer left school so I couldn't commit myself to a political career. Now I can fully commit myself to helping create a better future for our children.

Hobbies and interests

I've been a keen sportsman all my life mainly playing football, squash and clay shooting. Being 45 now and currently a self employed father I could no longer risk the injuries that veterans football presented, so regrettably I had to give it up. I've since taken up running and cycling and last year I completed my first triathlon and half marathon - with the weather we've had recently though I'd probably prefer a game of Euchre. I've been involved with a few charities on a volunteer basis, such as the You Can Do It Foundation, and in 2000 I climbed Kilimanjaro in aid of Help an African Schoolchild.

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